



## Mary Salas

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### MARY SALAS

ASSEMBLYMEMBER, 79TH DISTRICT

Dear Friend,

**D**id you know that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States? The American Cancer Society estimates that there will be nearly 60,000 new cases of skin cancer this year.

When diagnosed early, melanoma can be treated and cured. Therefore, it is important to recognize any changes to your skin and report them to your doctor immediately. This brochure was created to help you learn about the dangers of melanoma and what measures you can take to help prevent skin cancer.

For more information on other health related issues please contact my office.

Sincerely,

MARY SALAS

Assemblymember, 79th District

Early  
detection  
is the  
best  
protection

# Skin Cancer





# Skin Cancer: A Largely Preventable Cancer

**S**kin cancer is usually divided into two major groups: melanoma skin cancer and nonmelanoma skin cancer.

Nonmelanoma skin cancers (also called basal cell and squamous cell cancers) are the most common cancers of the skin. They are named nonmelanoma because they develop from skin cells other than melanocytes. Melanoma skin cancers (also called malignant melanomas), in contrast, begin in the melanocyte cells of the skin.

## Statistics

Skin cancer, both melanoma and nonmelanoma, is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Skin cancer accounts for more than 40% of all cancers.

## Did You Know...

- *The sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation can penetrate many types of clothing.*
- *It can also go through automobile and residential windows.*
- *It can damage your eyes, contributing to cataracts, macular degeneration and eyelid cancers.*
- *When you're on snow or ice, your face and eyes are at almost twice the risk of UV damage because of glare.*

## Who Is at Risk?

Anyone can get skin cancer, although people with certain characteristics are particularly at risk.

**Risk factors include:**

- *Fair to light skin complexion*
- *Family history of skin cancer*
- *Personal history of skin cancer*
- *Chronic exposure to the sun*
- *History of sunburns early in life*
- *Atypical moles*
- *A large number of moles*
- *Freckles (an indicator of sun sensitivity and sun damage)*

## Preventing Skin Cancer

The best way to lower the risk of nonmelanoma and melanoma skin cancer is to avoid overexposure to the sun and other sources of UV light. **Here are some suggestions that can help prevent skin cancer:**

- **Seek shade:** Especially in the middle of the day when the sun's rays are their strongest.
- **Cover up:** Wear a shirt and wear a hat with a brim.
- **Use sunscreen:** Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher. Be sure to reapply sunscreen every two hours, especially after swimming or sweating. Don't stay out in the sun longer just because you are using sunscreen.

- **Wear sunglasses:** Wrap-around sunglasses that absorb 99%-100% of the UV rays help protect your eyes and the skin around your eyes.
- **Don't use tanning beds and sun lamps:** These give off UV light and increase the risk of skin cancer.
- **Remember to protect children:** Use the methods above to protect children from too much sun, and as they get older, teach them to protect themselves.

## Self Examination

Remember to check your own skin about once a month. You should know the pattern of moles, freckles and other marks on your skin so that you will notice any changes. Self-examination is best when done in front of a full-length mirror. Spots on your skin that change in size, shape, or color should be seen by a doctor right away. In addition, any sore, lump, blemish, marking, or change in the way an area of the skin looks or feels may be a sign of skin cancer.

Below is a list that highlights some differences between normal moles and melanoma.

**Watch for these possible signs of melanoma:**

- *One half of the mole does not match the other.*
- *The edges of the mole are ragged or notched.*
- *The color of the mole is not the same all over. There may be various shades of tan, brown, or black; at times patches of red, blue, or white.*
- *The mole is wider than 1/4 inch.*

Some melanomas do not fit the above descriptions, and it may be hard to tell if a mole is normal or not. You should consult your doctor and share any concerns you have.

## Skin Cancer Resources

**American Cancer Society**  
(800) ACS-2345 or  
(800) 227-2345  
**[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)**

**National Cancer Institute  
Cancer Information Service**  
(800) 4 CANCER or  
(800) 422-6237  
**[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)**

**Cancer Care**  
(800) 813 HOPE or  
(800) 813-4673  
**[www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)**

